

# Milwaukee Ald. Coggs, Dimitrijevic: Violence prevention funding announcement on point with Council ARPA proposal

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The announcement this morning by Governor Tony Evers that the state will allocate \$45 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for violence prevention and to help victims of crime is much-needed good news for Milwaukee.

The Governor's announcement included the intent to send \$8 million of the \$45 million to the City of Milwaukee's Office of Violence Prevention (OVP). We extend our sincere thanks to Governor Evers for this badly-needed funding.

We are sponsoring a Common Council ARPA proposal to greatly bolster violence prevention in the city via OVP that would direct \$16.8 million for a multi-pronged effort, including expanding the 414Life violence interrupter team to the south side, increased youth violence prevention and trauma informed care, implementing the Blueprint for Peace on a neighborhood level, and other initiatives.

We believe it is vital that the city greatly step up OVP resources, capacity, and staffing, as suggested in the Wisconsin Policy Forum report "*Taking Stock: Milwaukee Police Department Policies and Protocols in the Context of National Reform*" (published in June 2021), which also noted that many peer cities have more robust staffing and budgets than Milwaukee's OVP.

As a city we are simply not doing enough, not investing enough, to prevent violence. It is on us to make sure we are directing adequate resources and upscaling the best programming possible to help prevent violence.

There is also the need for urgency, as the city's uptick in violence must be addressed head-on with greater resources NOW.

Milwaukee experienced an historically violent year in 2020, and the increase in the city's homicide rate was one of the top five highest in the nation. Sadly, we also saw a 79% increase in domestic violence deaths last year. In terms of homicides, we are also trending badly in 2021, and we firmly believe the proposal we are offering will have the impact of helping to prevent violence and deaths from happening in the near term.

For us it is simple: If we are not planning to direct the necessary resources to adequately fund the Office of Violence Prevention to help to prevent violence, then what are we planning for?